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2023

MR. ENS
ENGAGES
SPIRIT

PAGE 06

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Whether your past few weeks have been a drag to the finish or the end of the year sprang up on you, we in A113 are wishing you the best in whatever comes after this summer.

Staff writer Kody Moore opens the issue with a look at what some of those plans might be, followed by another senior celebration, explored by staff writer Destiny Albrecht and life editor Chase Golem.

In sports, staff writer Maggie Terry covers student athletes who've committed to play in college, and staff writer Jalen Flowers speaks with long-time EHS coaches leaving their positions.

Staff writer Annisyn Krebs-Carr takes a tour of the StL region for summer activities. Culture editor Maddox Karnes reviews this year's Met Gala, and Flowers closes the section to preview this summer's most-anticipated movies.

To open views, staff writer Pera Onal discusses the home of EHS Publications and what the future is for our media center.

It still hasn't set in that this is the last one of these I'll ever write for EHS (but I'll save the sentimentality for page 22). Thank you all for everything. It's been fun.

CASPAR DOWDY
Editor-in-chief



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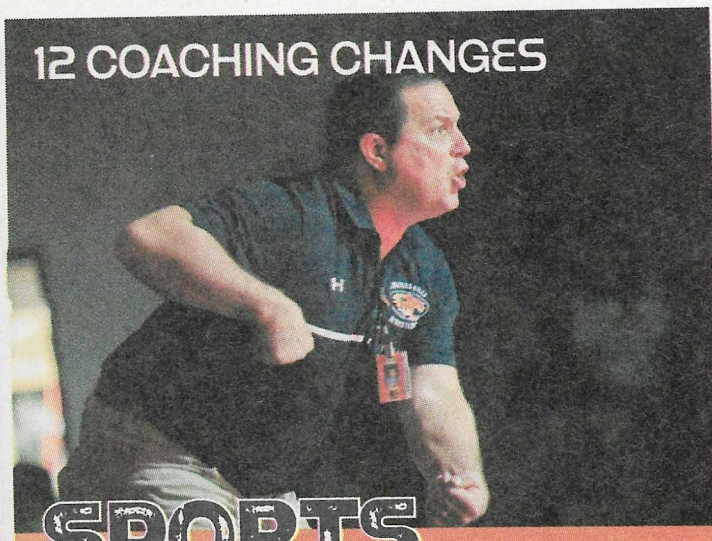
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08 SENIOR PLANS

LIFE

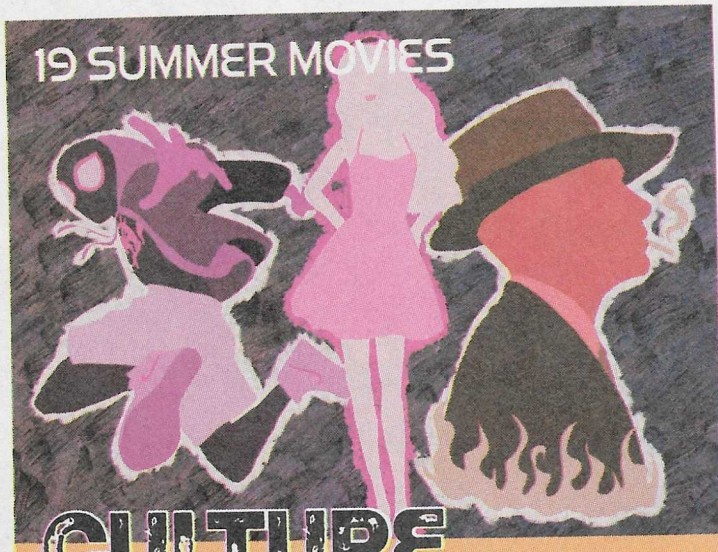
04 Senior plans
06 Mr. EHS
08 Science symposium



12 COACHING CHANGES

SPORTS

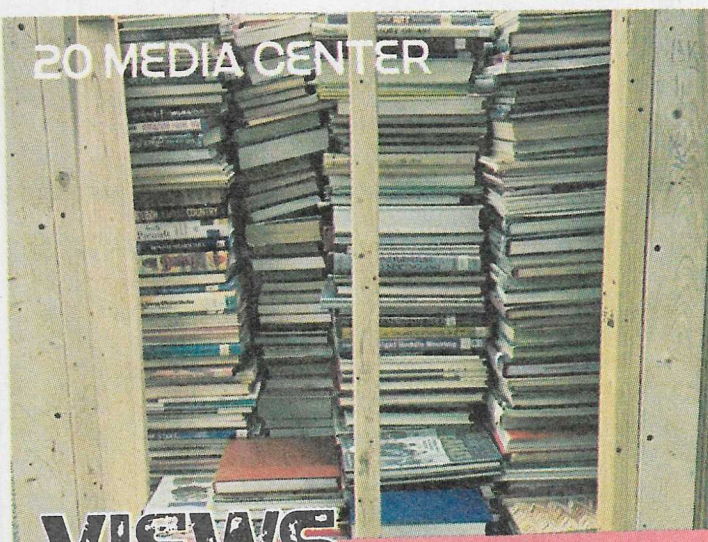
10 College commitments
12 Coaching changes
13 Athletes of the quarter



19 SUMMER MOVIES

CULTURE

14 StL summer activities
16 Met Gala fashion
18 Bubble tea history
19 Anticipated summer movies



20 MEDIA CENTER

VIEWS

20 Media center demolition
21 Senior year reflection
22 Edwardsville publications

The goal of The Claw is to report Life, Sports, Culture and Views stories to the students and faculty of Edwardsville High School. Students in Journalism and Yearbook primarily contribute to the magazine, but students outside of these programs can submit work and be published if that work is exceptional.

The Claw is a student-run publication, and the views featured in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of District 7 or any of its employees.

We appreciate letters to the editor, so long as the topics remain school appropriate. These letters may be sent to EDWARDSVILLEPUBLICATIONS@GMAIL.COM with "Letter to the Editor" in the subject line, or brought to room A113 before or after school.

We reserve the right to reject any letters for any reason, including lack of space, without explanation.

Seniors look forward to next steps as the end of high school nears

The last day of senior year is the end of a 13-year schooling process. With that behind them, seniors begin to explore life beyond Edwardsville.

by Kody Moore, staff writer

As the school year progresses through its final weeks, it marks the end of high school for seniors.

High school seniors nationwide are preparing to bid farewell to their high school years and begin a new chapter in their lives as the academic year draws to a close. For many students at EHS, this is a bittersweet period, as they face both excitement for their next steps and sadness for leaving behind their current phase.

Over the last four years, EHS seniors have put forth tremendous effort to excel academically, participate in extracurricular activities, and forge lasting relationships. They have successfully navigated the ups and downs of high school life, including challenging tests, tight deadlines, sporting events, and school dances. They have grown and evolved along the way, acquiring new skills and interests.

Many EHS students have chosen to stay close to home to be near their families like Tanner Jacoby and Zach Ziolkowski.

Tanner Jacoby opted for SWIC over Renken to study electrician work because he won't have to travel far.

"I chose SWIC because I like the area more, and it isn't in Missouri, so I don't have to travel far, and it is in-state, making the cost of schooling cheaper," Jacoby said.

As seniors prepare to graduate, they are experiencing a range of emotions. On the one hand, many seniors are excited to embark on the next phase of their lives. They will be attending college or university, while others will enter the workforce or the military. Some others will take a different path by taking a gap year to explore their options and gain life experience. Regardless of their choice, they can look forward to a new and exciting adventure after EHS.

On the other hand, according to a recent poll, over 70 of EHS seniors feel sad that their high school journey is nearing its end.

Ziolkowski had a tough decision between going to a technical school or going to SIUE for a college degree.

"I decided to pursue a career in technology since it would allow me to start earning a respectable income by the age of 20," Ziolkowski said. "It will also save me a lot of money."

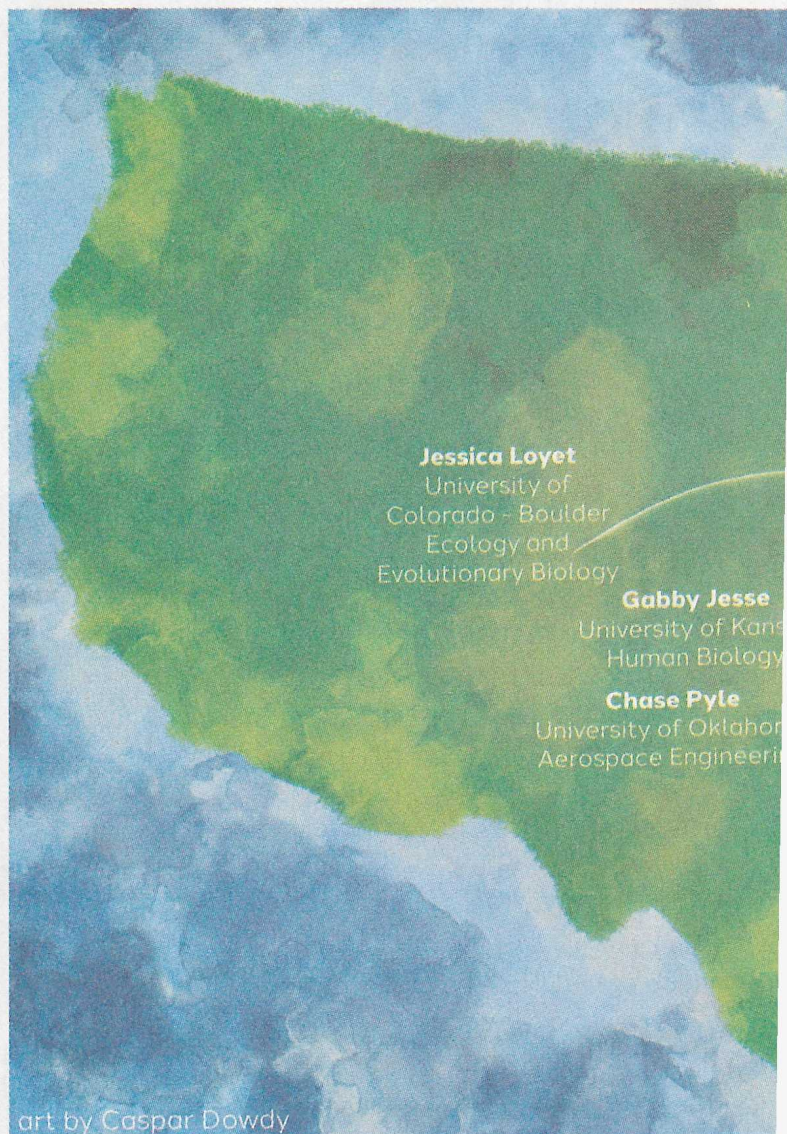
Although some students choose to stay close, others try to distance themselves from the small town of Edwardsville.

"I chose the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire because it is not far from my house, but it is also close enough for me to return if necessary," Sam Wittek said. "I also liked the school because of



photo by Sam Hangsleben

Seniors Madelyn Milburn, Gabby Jesse and Kylie England sit on top of a car on the morning of August 26 to celebrate the beginning of their last year of high school with the Senior Sunrise.



Jessica Loyet
University of
Colorado - Boulder
Ecology and
Evolutionary Biology

Gabby Jesse
University of Kansas
Human Biology

Chase Pyle
University of Oklahoma
Aerospace Engineering

art by Caspar Dowdy

More in Illinois:

Madi Trimm

U of I - Urbana-Champaign
Classics

Mackenzie Petry

U of I - Urbana-Champaign
Biology/Pre-Medical

Avery Hamilton

University of Illinois - Springfield
Softball

Sarah Brase

SIUC
Animal Science/Pre-Veterinary

Cooper Rutledge

U of I - Urbana-Champaign
Environmental Engineering

Some further-flung seniors:

Sam Wittek

University of Wisconsin-
Eau Claire
Business and Psychology

Sam Tichenor

University of Cincinnati
Fine Arts

Grace Ramsey

Butler University
Exploratory Studies
Marching Band

Abbie Miller

Murray State University
Speech Pathology

Niyah Gelin

Mississippi State
University
Criminology

Ryan Olson

Middle Georgia State
Aviation

Adrienne Hunt

University of
Mississippi
Elementary Education

Emmy Larrew

University of Florida
Chemical Engineering

Zoe Nelson

Florida Gulf Coast State
Digital Media Design

Information from survey responses
and @seniors.ehs.2023 on Instagram



photo by Caspar Dowdy

Seniors pose with signs baring their class year as members of student council film them for their homecoming assembly class video. Homecoming 2022 was the first year to have a homecoming assembly, and show class videos, since 2019.

its affordability and the size of the town and student body.”

As seniors bid farewell to their high school years, they may experience a sense of sadness and nostalgia. They will miss the familiar faces of their teachers and classmates, as well as the daily routine of school life. They may also feel uncertain as they face the challenges and opportunities of the future. ■

Mr. EHS crowns winner, re-ignites waning school spirit, participation

A tradition returns with seniors taking to the stage to sing, dance and do magic after a COVID-19 pause, amid declining school engagement.

by Destiny Albrecht, staff writer; Chase Golem, life editor

A crowd of hundreds, spotlights on stage, judges at the ready, contestants looking their best and hosts eager to start the show: characteristics of Mr. EHS, one of the last Student Council-led events of the year.

Mr. EHS had been a tradition for many years; however, during COVID-19, the event came to an abrupt stop. On April 18, for the first time since 2019, Mr. EHS drew the community into the auditorium to watch contestants perform.

More than 600 students, parents, faculty and special guests attended the event for \$5 each, with all of the proceeds going to benefit the Illinois Special Olympics.

"Every part of it was very positive, and everyone clapped for each contestant," senior Troy Schaffer said. "I had a great time and I'm really hoping they do it again next year."

Along with the help from student government and National Honors Society volunteers, senior hosts Lexi Trimm, Caroline Marcus and Izzy O'Day worked to ensure the night went well.

“

I think school spirit has definitely taken a toll since COVID-19.

”

- senior Madilyn Flavio

"I was pretty nervous at first, but the energy and participation from the crowd made it really easy," Trimm said. "We prepped some and had a sheet but only word for word had to explain the event and the charity, the rest was improv."

Each act was approved by Principal Steve Stuart as well as student council sponsors Jamie Kupferer and Tricia Gray.

According to Trimm, they allowed time for each contestant to practice their talent and possible interview answers during the days leading up to Mr. EHS.

A total of 14 senior contestants took the stage with their own acts and styles. The winner received not only two free prom tickets and Tiger Den coupons but also \$200 for the charity of the winner's choosing.

The high energy and large turnout for the event stood out from the past few school years, where many students have discussed the topic of school spirit and how it's been dwindling. Of a survey of 301 students, 71% said they believed there's been less school

spirit and engagement with school activities in recent years.

"I think school spirit has definitely taken a toll since COVID-19," senior Madilyn Flavio said. "It was great to see Edwardsville students come together. You could tell the audience just wanted to have a good time."

Community events like Mr. EHS may mark a new post-COVID wave of school engagement: of the survey respondents who attended Mr. EHS, 86.1% said it inspired them to participate in more school events in the future.

After everyone had performed their talent, the judges selected eight contestants to move forward. They asked personal questions to each senior, some serious, others not. Afterward, they were ready to give their votes for the final three.

Johnnie Robinson placed third after his lip sync with Isayah Kloster to "The Girl is Mine" by Michael Jackson. Axton Anom placed second with a performance of "When I Was Your Man" by Bruno Mars, and Maddox Karnes took home the crown and scepter for Mr. EHS after a drag number that had the audience on their feet.

Karnes chose to donate his winnings to the ACLU Drag Defense Fund and the Alton Pride organization.

But, according to Karnes, it wasn't about the money or the crown, "although it was pretty great to win for my club." It was about the energy throughout the auditorium during the event.

"The audience was crazy," Karnes said. "While I was performing, I couldn't hear my music because of how hard people cheered. You could tell people were so happy to be there."

Marcus agreed that she had never seen anything like it before.



Isayah Kloster, Mr. Basketball, takes off his sunglasses as he approaches the microphone at the start of the show to introduce himself to the judges.

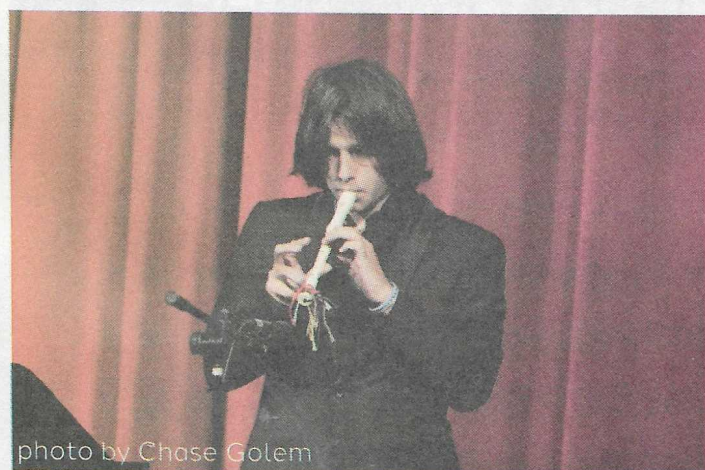
"It was better than I ever could have imagined," Marcus said.

After the hosts had crowned the winner, Marcus took to the stage to give a speech about her time on Student Council, with Mr. EHS being the last event she had planned as president. She explained how grateful she was to be an organizer and leader in the school.

After the show ended, supporters and volunteers stood on the stage to take pictures and congratulate contestants. Erin Townzen, Karnes' mother, recalled a conversation with Dr. Stuart that took place during the celebrations.

"He came up to me after the show and said 'This is what it's all about. Seeing the joy on these kids' faces is exactly what Mr. EHS is here for,'" Townzen said. "I couldn't agree more. I am so thankful that [Maddox] is supported so much at school; that's how it should be."

Senior Axton Anom said all the contestants were just happy to be there, and was "glad they got to experience such an amazing night." ■



Top Maddox Karnes, Mr. Yearbook, dances in drag to "Break Free" by Ariana Grande. **Bottom** With his arm in a sling, Tyler Dacus, Mr. NHS, plays "Hot Cross Buns" on the recorder.

Maddox Karnes

Mr. Yearbook

Lip synched to "Break Free" by Ariana Grande

Axton Anom

Mr. Student Council

Sung "When I Was Your Man" by Bruno Mars

Isayah Kloster, Johnnie Robinson

Mr. Basketball, Mr. Football

Lip synched to "The Girl is Mine" by Michael Jackson

Dawson Rull

Mr. Wrestling

Danced with Nathan Hollis to "Party in the USA" by Miley Cyrus

Jacob Watts

Mr. Drama

Standup comedy

Nick Anderson

Mr. Band

Played the "Veggie Tales" theme song on the tuba

Will Holland

Mr. French Honor Society

Played the French National Anthem on the cello

Sid Kuchangi

Mr. Engineering Club

Magic tricks with the help of Jacob Watts and Nick Anderson

Tyler Dacus

Mr. National Honor Society

Played "Hot Cross Buns" on the recorder

Ryan Koester

Mr. Spanish Honor Society

Ate hot chicken wings

Derek Marcus

Mr. Orchestra

Played the viola

Charles Pyle

Mr. Filmmakers Club

Played the clarinet

Spencer Rawson

Mr. Math Team

Showed off his nunchuck skills

Science Symposium, new programs provide a window into the future

The research club, alongside initiatives like Tomorrow's High School, give students a way to experience potential careers before leaving school.

by Caspar Dowdy, editor-in-chief

To the average high schooler, thinking of a science fair might conjure up memories of elementary school, of basic experiments and asking parents to rush to the store for poster board the night before a project was due. For a group of EHS students, though, the science fair grew with them: they're conducting research, presenting papers and getting real-world experience.

The club is Science Symposium, led by biology teacher Julia Doll, who hopes to grow the program in coming years. While scientific research is the focus of the group, it's the ability to build life skills — like sharing that work with others — that stands out to Mrs. Doll when she looks at her students.

"It doesn't matter if you win or lose, truly," Mrs. Doll said. "It matters when I watch you get up on that stage, or get in front of a judge, and watch the confidence level go up, and I watch the networking skills."

The group submits their work to two organizations, the Illinois Junior Academy of Science and the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium. A presentation to JSHS, whose Southern Illinois region is based in Carbondale, gave senior Amber Smith the opportunity to take her research to a national science fair in Virginia Beach.

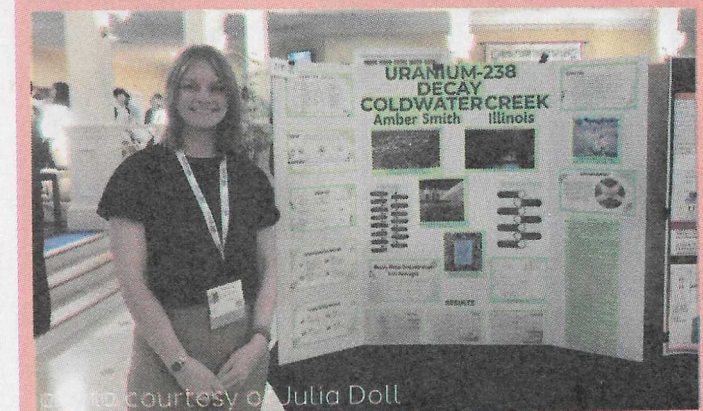
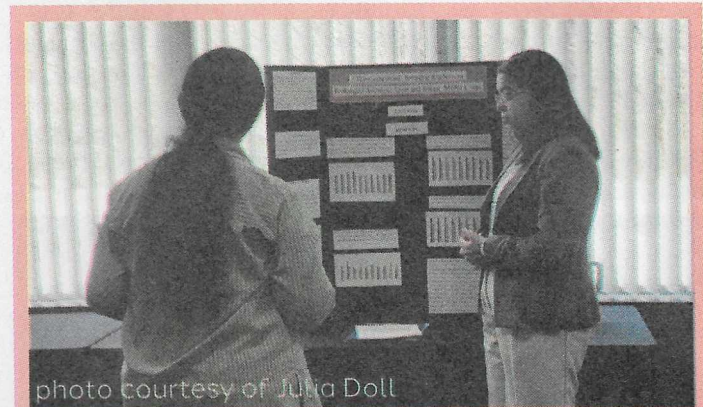
Smith began looking into lead contamination near Coldwater Creek, Missouri, after a college counselor suggested she find a way to get research experience in high school. A poster documenting her findings was selected to represent her region at the Virginia conference, which included demonstrations of military research from the Department of Defense. The experience, Smith said, will help her access more opportunities as she pursues neuroscience at the University of Illinois.

"Depending on the size of your school, the harder it is to get into a research program. There's a certain amount of students per faculty that cannot just be squeezed into those labs," Smith said. "By doing research in high school, I've set myself up to already know the research process, and it's like that little bit of an edge on the rest of the student body..."

For senior Eman Rana, Science Symposium wasn't just a head start on college. Getting involved with research early meant being introduced to new options for the future. But Rana's project, a study on social media's impact on attention spans that involved subjects from EHS, came after a period of having no interest in researching.

"I was a huge psychology nerd, everything about psychology, learning about the brain..." Rana said. "But I kept looking at all this research and thinking, 'Man, this is so boring. I hate it, I do not ever want to do this. I only want to do clinical stuff.'"

Leading Mental Health Awareness Club meant Rana was already interested in understanding issues with social media. When she was selected to participate in a program for students interested in clinical psychology, she started to reconsider how



Top Rana presents her research to a judge at the Science and Humanities Symposium. "I was very nervous but got my groove once I started presenting," Rana said. **Middle** Smith stands with her research at the national competition in Virginia Beach. **Bottom** Junior Will Wojcieszak and freshman John Almos stand with their research in Carbondale. "It's not always about winning," Almos said. "You still can contribute to the field you're researching in..."

she'd engage with those topics in the future.

"Little did I know I would have to do research in that cohort, and I was like, 'Oh, this is going to suck,'" Rana said. "And then as we keep talking about research, and the basics, and it's basically just the scientific method over and over again, I was like, 'Wait, this is kind of cool, I kind of like this...' Once I started researching, I just could not stop. And now we're here."

Rana now plans to continue exploring those topics, using the experience she gained through Science Symposium to apply for lab positions, as she studies cognitive and behavioral neuroscience at Loyola University Chicago.

"If it weren't for this type of thing, I would not have fallen in love with research the way I did, and I would not have chosen the major I chose, and I would not have been a lot better at public speaking," Rana said. "This has completely pivoted what I'm going into in the future."

“This has completely pivoted what I’m going into in the future.”

Encouraging more career realizations like Rana's is the goal of Tomorrow's High School, an initiative led by teachers, administration and school support staff. By introducing a wider selection of classes to EHS, they hope to create opportunities for students to get hands-on experience with the work they want to do in their future.

The goal of the program, according to Dr. Steve Stuart, is to implement "career tracks" into course selection, giving students the opportunity to learn about their chosen field as early as freshman year.

"You can't expect a 13- or 14-year-old to say, 'Well, I want to do this when I grow up,'" Dr. Stuart said. "But what they can do is say, 'This seems to be an interest to me,' and start taking some of these classes."

Stuart sees the career experience being especially helpful for students who plan to go into a trade after high school.

Options like math and English classes geared toward specific careers, he said, will allow students to learn the skills a traditional high school class would teach them while preparing

them for their future.

"I would like our students to be able to see that there are options out there. Not every student has to go to a four-year university, and I've been big on that for years..." he said. "There are jobs out there that pay well that have great benefits that will allow you to live a great lifestyle... not everything hinges on a four-year degree from a university."

The initiative plans to strengthen partnerships with local trade unions, community colleges and institutions like the Collinsville Area Vocational Center to give students more options for job experience in coming years. Eventually, though, Dr. Stuart said he'd like to see Edwardsville with its own in-district career resources.

There's a drive to connect students with professional resources across disciplines: for Mrs. Doll and the students of Science Symposium, whose research is currently limited to what they can access through EHS, there's hope that a growing program will mean working more with area universities.

"The problem is that we need institutions to allow our students into their labs," Mrs. Doll said.

To Smith, the ability to work with college-level equipment makes a large difference while researching.

"The guy who got first place, I wouldn't say this is how he got there, he did have access to the things that I was, like, foaming at the mouth to have access to..." she said. "His access, I guess, made his research more professional."

After multiple attempts to use resources from SIUE, Mrs. Doll said she plans to try building a relationship with the labs at SWIC and Lewis and Clark. Until then, though, as this year's Science Symposium researchers present their work for the last time, Doll is getting ready for the next.

"I'm already looking forward. Literally before school is out, saying, 'Okay, who's doing what over the summer? Who needs me? Who needs help? What are we doing? So let's set this up for when as soon as we come back in August,'" she said.

In a sense, the student researchers of Science Symposium are test subjects in their own right — teachers like Doll look to the skills they learn when they discuss the importance of early exposure to career interests.

"It's not just 'Oh, yeah, I made money here, or I got first place at state,' or whatever," she said. "It's, 'What do you get to do? What is the foundation of the pathway to move forward in the future?' That's what I like about Science Symposium." ■



art by Caspar Dowdy

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ANDREW
HENDRICKSON

Lincoln Land College

BRANDON
ROGERS

College of DuPage

JOHNNIE
ROBINSON

Quincy

DORIAN
ARGUELLES

D1 Western Illinois

RILEY
IFFRIG

D1 Indiana State

KAYDEN
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2023

infographic by Veda Kommineni

Athletes go into overtime as they leave EHS sports behind for college

As secondary school careers come to an end, 19 EHS seniors gear up for the next phase by choosing to play their sports at the collegiate level.

by Maggie Terry, staff writer

As seasons end and seniors say their last goodbyes to the sport they have played throughout high school, this marks the end to many seniors' years of playing.

But for some, this is just the beginning.

Nineteen seniors have committed to continue their athletic pursuits at the collegiate level. The list includes numerous sports, with baseball having five commits, the most out of all sports.

Seven of these commitments are playing at the Division I level.

Senior Olivia Baca, soccer forward, announced her DI commitment to Xavier University's women's soccer program during her junior year.

"It was Xavier's team atmosphere that was really welcoming, and I wanted to play at the highest level possible," Baca said.

Senior Emerson Weller committed at the beginning of her senior year. She will continue her basketball career at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, following her older brother, Brennan Weller, who is a class of 2022 graduate.

"My brother being there makes it a sense of having home away from home," Weller said.

Fans' exposure to recruiting is limited to social media announcements and signing days, but for many of these athletes, recruitment was a much longer and more strenuous process.

Baca describes the recruitment process as stressful.

"I wanted to wait as long as possible to make my decision," Baca said. "I had a lot of schools to look at with a lot of different timelines."

Weller talked to a few different schools, including a few DIII schools and JuCo schools, as coaches started coming to tournaments and as her coach messaged college coaches. UMSL first started talking to Weller after one of their coaches saw her play in a tournament in Chicago over the summer.

"UMSL allows me to play basketball at the next level and get a good education," Weller said. "So I knew that's where I would be happiest."

The recruiting process consists of researching schools to fit a players' athletic ability and talking to coaches to find the right fit, according to senior golf player Nicole Johnson.

"The recruiting process can be scary but I'm happy with where I am going to play," Johnson said.

Johnson committed to play DI golf at the University of Middle Tennessee.

Only 6% of student athletes across the U.S. will continue playing their sport out of high school, according to the NCAA. One of the top reasons why students don't continue playing their sport is due to burnout.

But for these 19 athletes, this wasn't the case.

Baca has been playing soccer since she was 5, always dreaming of being able to play at the DI level. After hours of practicing and working, she achieved her goal.

"It means a lot to me," Baca said. "I really put my mind to

something and was able to achieve it."

As high school comes to a close, the commits are getting ready for their next step.

Senior baseball first baseman Andrew Hendrickson's summer will consist of training to play at Lincoln Land Community College but making sure to do it in a way he enjoys.

He plans to stick to a consistent workout plan and he also plans to play in a college league with his friends.

"Playing will keep me fresh to go into college but I don't want to workout myself too much when I'm exhausted when it gets time to go to college," Hendrickson said.

Hendrickson will leave to start his college season during the first week of July.

"Leaving early sucks considering it's my last summer. But I know I'm going to enjoy playing in college," Hendrickson said. "I'm excited to start with the next part of my life." ■

Olivia Baca



photo by Max Thrun

Emerson Weller



photo by Corinna Winkler

Nicole Johnson



photo by Corinna Winkler

Andrew Hendrickson

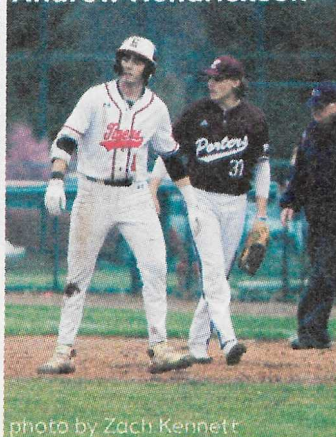


photo by Zach Kennett

Coaches move on, reminisce on careers

Four head coaches look back on their careers and look forward to the future of their sports.

by Jalen Flowers, staff writer

Over 50 years of experience, 300 wins and legacies-beyond-their-sports will be missing from EHS next year. The boys wrestling, girls basketball and football teams will be welcoming new head coaches in their upcoming seasons, ending the eras of the accomplished coaches who lead those teams to victory.

"Some of us have been coaching for a very long time," boys wrestling coach John Wagner said. "It's just time to let the younger coaches have a try at it."

Coach Wagner is giving the reins of boys wrestling up to assistant coach Eric Pretto. In 31 years as head coach, Wagner coached three state champions through his team-oriented and disciplinary coaching style.

"We call it 'Tiger Style,'" Coach Wagner said. "We're not perfect, but it's a way of living your life. It's about being competitive on the mat and training the right way. I hope it never goes away."

Coach Wagner credits the practice room as his team's sanctuary, where his "tiger style" was implemented and where the coaches and players built the relationships that will stick with him past resignation.

"Every coach I've worked with this year has worked with me a minimum of 20 years," Coach Wagner said. "That's a long time. It goes beyond wrestling and becomes friendships with them and the players."

Similar to Coach Wagner, girls basketball coach Caty Happe is stepping down from her position after a fruitful career. Happe went 61-19 after starting her tenure in 2020 on her way to becoming a two-time Southwestern Conference champion.

"The experiences in the state tournaments were some of the coolest things to be a part of," Coach Happe said. "That's part of the team building and environment that I'm going to miss."

Coach Happe was a three-sport athlete at EHS before graduating in 2011. She describes herself as a product of a focused athletics program. Nearly 10 years later, she became head basketball coach and planned on instilling some of the values she learned as a player.

"Building strong and confident young women was my goal when I started off," Coach Happe said. "I'm glad to have help build and expand upon that during these past couple years."

Coach Happe will continue coaching softball but is resigning from girls basketball to reserve time for her family. She gave birth to twins in June of last year, and will sacrifice a sport to focus on them.

"There's a lot that goes on in athletics as far as the time it takes," Happe said. "We all love spending valuable time with other kids, but it's also about making time for our own."

After an 11-year career at EHS, head football coach Matt Martin also made the family-oriented decision to resign his lead role. Martin started off as an interim head coach, taking over in the absence of former head coach Mark Bliss. Over 100 wins, three SWC championships and two undefeated seasons later, Martin has decided to relocate closer to his family after building

strong connections during his career.

"It's a relationship business," Martin said. "Coaching is about building relationships with people whether it's the parents, players or other staff."

Martin recalls his signature moments as a coach being his 2022 playoff win against O'Fallon and a double-digit comeback against Huntley in 2017.

With experience leaving and newer coaches getting a chance to create their own culture, the core values of EHS athletics still remain the same.

"We try to give the kids a foundation," Martin said. "It's about giving them what they need to be better. We just want them to be successful." ■



photo by Casey Stover



photo by Mason Kane



photo by Mason Kane

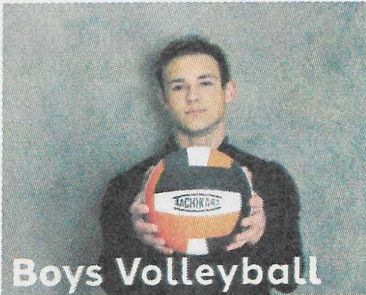


photo by Charles Pyle

1. Head wrestling coach Jon Wagner coaches from the sidelines at a meet against Lafayette on Jan. 11. **2.** Girls varsity basketball coach Caty Happe discusses plays with her athletes at a game against Belleville West on Feb. 8, 2021. **3.** Head football coach Matt Martin gives a pep talk to his athletes at a game against Belleville East on March 26, 2021. **4.** Field hockey coach Jaimee Henderson speaks at the end-of-season event on Nov. 8, 2021. Henderson plans to resign as varsity coach this year to focus on her first child, who is due during the field hockey season. She has been the coach for nine years.

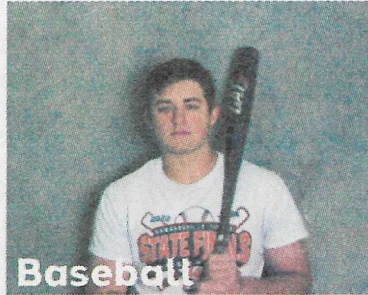
Athletes Of The Quarter

Coaches submitted their picks for the spring athlete of the quarter, and explained why they think the student deserves the title.



Boys Volleyball

Joe Liston has led the team in a number of statistical areas and stands as the player the team leans on when they need something good to happen. He has been the go-to in a lot of situations.



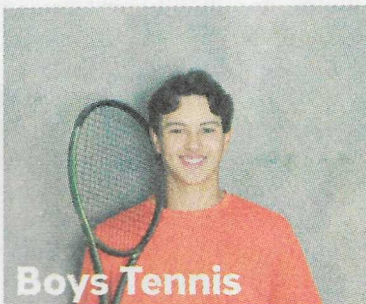
Baseball

Logan Geggus has a 2.33 ERA. He's performed well on the mound. He's been a consistent performer for the team and struck out 37 opponents in 24 innings. He's been a great leader for the team.



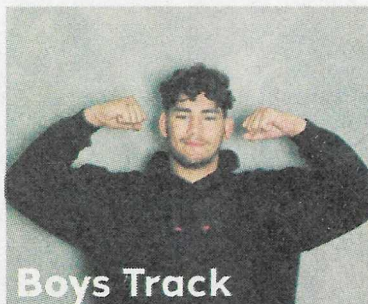
Softball

Avery Hamilton is hitting .484 and has an ERA of 1.78. She is our leadoff hitter and has the most innings of all our pitchers. When she is not pitching she plays shortstop.



Boys Tennis

Jesse Hatstrup current plays No. 1 singles. He always competes hard and very well. He is one of the best singles players in the area, and he's had a fantastic start to his season.



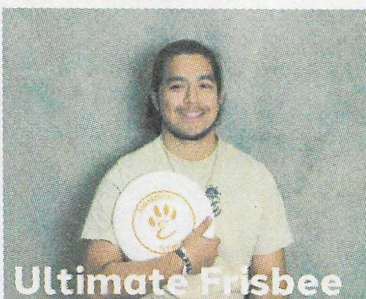
Boys Track

Iose Epenesa has scored several points in the last big track meets. He broke the record for freshman/sophomore shot put, originally held by his brother, A.J., with 54-2.



Girls Track

Emily Nuttall always shows up, no matter what event she's in. She takes care of business. She manages to run up a good number of points. She's consistent and she can run very good splits on relays.



Ultimate Frisbee

Hector Chaidez is one of the captains of the team and he always puts the team first. He is very level-headed when it comes to playing ultimate. He represents all good things about the sport.



Girls Lacrosse

Taylor Mollett is one of the founding members of the program. She scored a hat trick in the first IHSA win in program history. She's a two-year team captain and an integral part of the leadership.



Girls Soccer

Kylie Peel has been a play-maker all season. Her energy on the field has lifted the team throughout. She's scoring goals and creating goals by making assists, and she's just one of the hardest workers.

Meet me in StL... top 10 places to go in the city, county or Metro this summer

If you're restless and looking for things to do this summer, I share my top 10 favorite activities to help you minimize or resolve your summer boredom.

by Annisyn Krebs-Carr, staff writer

Thinking of fun activities or places to go during the summer can often be irritating or even overwhelming, especially since the surrounding area doesn't present a whole lot of options. But despite the boredom you may feel if you've lived in Edwardsville your whole life, there are plenty of fun activities to do over the summer, even if that means driving 30 minutes to St. Louis. Here are my top 10 favorite things to do surrounding the St. Louis and Edwardsville area over the summer.

1. Visit the Delmar Loop in St. Louis. Filled with unique restaurants, charming boba shops and boutiques, The Loop is a perfect place to spend your day. There's plenty of opportunity to have some fun, whether you want to window shop or plan on blowing through your money. Make sure to set aside a few hours for your trip, and don't forget to visit Vintage Vinyl while you're there!
2. Go to the Soulard Farmers Market. If you love food and you're more of an outdoorsy type, Soulard Market is something that you'll definitely want to visit. Open on Saturday mornings until November, the market is filled with tons of appetizing food, fresh produce, and other unique options.
3. Go to a concert. St. Louis hosts plenty of concerts, from big names to smaller indie artists, to free concerts at one of many parks. With numerous concert venues like The Pageant, The Enterprise Center, The Factory and The Fox, several artists are making their way to St. Louis this summer, including Lil Baby, Natalie Merchant, Erykah Badu, Alicia Keys and Chris Stapleton. And if you don't feel like making the drive to St. Louis, you could always see who's playing at the Wildey on Main Street in Edwardsville.
4. Go on a picnic. Picnics don't have to be super fancy, Pinterest-worthy ordeals; they can just be something small. And while it may seem like a basic idea, planning a cute picnic is something that can kill a few hours and be a lot of fun. So whether by yourself or with friends, grab a few of your favorite snacks and drinks, go to your local park, or maybe even your own backyard, lay out your blanket and enjoy the summer weather.
5. Visit St. Charles's Main Street. If you're a fan of the Loop but want something a little smaller and more intimate, take a walk down St. Charles Main Street. A charming location with good food and cute shops, St. Charles is the perfect way to spend a couple hours with friends. Buy some jewelry from one of a number of jewelry stores, cookies from Grandma's Cookies, or check out the bookstores. And maybe think about coming back during the winter to see the Christmas lights!

6. Go to the St. Louis Foundry. St. Louis is known for all types of different food, and going to The Foundry is the perfect opportunity to get a taste of what St. Louis is known for. Whether you're looking for breakfast, dinner, dessert, Creole, Afro-Caribbean, Hawaiian or just burgers and pizza, The Foundry allows you to try a little bit of everything.

7. Go to a festival. St. Louis and Edwardsville host many different summer festivals, filled with street vendors, food trucks and live music that highlights different cultures and events. For example, if you consider yourself an avid strawberry lover, May 13 is the start of the strawberry festival in Belleville. If you want to celebrate your culture, May 27 is the beginning of the African Arts Festival in Forest Park, as well as the Greek Fest at Assumption. And if you don't feel like making the drive to St. Louis, check out Edwardsville Route 66 festival in June.

8. Go for a hike. You don't have to travel all the way to the Rocky Mountains to find a good hiking spot. And although the view around here probably won't be as pretty, there's still plenty of spots in the area for you to tap into your transcendentalist side. If you want to stay around here, the Watershed is the obvious answer, but if you don't mind driving a little bit you can go to Pere Marquette in Grafton, or Fort Belle Fontaine in St. Louis; either way there's plenty of opportunities for you to appreciate the surrounding nature.

9. Go to a drive-in movie. If you're a movie lover, like myself, and want a movie experience besides the normal theater, a drive-in movie is something that you'll want to visit this summer. Skyview drive-in, in both Belleville and Litchfield, plays a select number of movies during the weekend for a cheap price. So gather your friends and some snacks and go catch a movie! (Also don't forget to turn your car off when watching the movie so your battery doesn't die...)

10. Go to The Muny. If you're a theater fan and enjoy being outside, then going to The Muny is a perfect way to spend a summer evening. An open-air theater in Forest Park, The Muny is playing seven shows this summer, from "Beauty and the Beast," to "Little Shop of Horrors." And the best part is, you don't necessarily need to have money to see a show! If you don't mind being a little far back from the stage, the last nine rows of The Muny are always free to the public.

So as you look for fun activities to do with friends, family or even by yourself this summer, hopefully this list provided some helpful guidance. Don't die of boredom, and have a fun summer! ■



Skyview drive-in, located in Belleville



Flamenco Exquisite Floral Design on The Loop



Japanese Breakfast at The Pageant last summer



Hiking spot at Pere Marquette in Grafton



A picnic at the park



Vintage Vinyl on The Loop

Couture cats and Lagerfeld looks hit the carpet at the 2023 Met Gala

The 2023 Met Gala took place on May 1 and brought some of the best, and worst, looks that the event has ever had walk the star-studded event.

by Maddox Karnes, culture editor

Fashion's most notorious night of the year has come and gone once again – the Met Gala.

The gala is held every year on the first Monday in May as a fundraiser for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute. A-listers and their underlings walk the carpet along the steps of the Met, wearing some of fashion's most current and questionable pieces.

The theme for the 2023 gala was "In Honor of Karl," a tribute to the late Karl Lagerfeld. Lagerfeld was a German fashion designer who from 1983 until his death took over the reins of the Chanel fashion house. His work has walked countless runways on famous models from Cindy Crawford to Naomi Campbell, and he has staple symbols like his love for his birman cat, which had more than enough references on the carpet, and black and white color schemes.

Some of his most famous moments under the Chanel label include the Fall/Winter 1985 Chanel show at Paris Fashion Week where Linda Evangelista walked out in a black body suit draped in gold chain and at the Haute Couture Fall/Winter show in 1989 where Naomi Campbell stomped in a tailored white jacket with caged gladiator gloves. Both are signature Lagerfeld looks that take classic Chanel inspiration, a black dress or tweed suit, and add an innovative spin, which is the direction I hoped many would take the night of May 1.

When I first heard the theme, I had a sigh of displeasure. My favorite Met Gala themes and the ones I think garner the best looks are ones dealing with aesthetics such as Heavenly Bodies (2018), Camp: Notes on Fashion (2019) and PUNK: Chaos to Couture (2013).

I'm not often as entertained when the theme aligns with a particular designer. A perfect example is the 2014 gala where the

theme was "Charles James: Beyond Fashion." I feel like the designs either were trapped in a box or didn't attempt the theme at all. And if there was a designer who should get a Met Gala theme, my first pick would've been the late Thierry Mugler who passed away in January of 2023. His work would've made for a wide array of crazy yet couture looks on the bodies of some of our favorite stars.

But despite my initial criticisms, I did my best to go into the 2023 Met Gala with an open mind. And I must say – I was not disappointed.

There were some tacky looks on that carpet (Jared Leto, I'm looking at you). The obscene amount of birman cat references was a little much, but for most of the looks that alluded to Lagerfeld's feline obsession, they were outstanding.

The celebrities did not come to play this year. My seemingly low expectations were surpassed as people walked in with black and white ensembles and old Chanel references. The 2023 gala truly "Met" the bar.

“

When I first heard the theme, I had a sigh of displeasure.

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photos courtesy of AP Images
Anna Wintour walks in to the gala alongside Bill Nighy. Wintour serves as a co-chair and a symbol for the Met Gala.



Which looks were **Hot** and which looks were **Not**?

1. This was by far my favorite look of the night. Ashley Graham stunned in this nod to '80s Chanel glamour. The gown, designed by Harris Reed, feels fresh; she looked as if she was wearing a dress in the middle of deconstruction. The Saturn's rings-esque silhouette added that extra touch to make this the best look of the night and one of my favorites to come out of any Met Gala. 2. Michelle Yeoh stunned in this nod to Lagerfeld's personal style that was created under the Lagerfeld label itself. The tuxedo-like garment looked like it could've been worn by the late designer himself. Her look was elevated to new limits with the exaggerated sleeves and huge train. It's a look that has a lot of fabric, yet Yeoh isn't lost in it at all. She looks strong and dominant in the garment. 3. I don't get too excited over menswear, but Bad Bunny brought a fresh and tasteful look designed by Simon Porte Jacquemus. His tailored tweed suit in a classy white fits very well within the Lagerfeld identity. What sets it apart is the back cut-out with a metal chain cascading down the middle of it. And of course the star piece is the white flower boa that trained multiple feet behind him. Bad Bunny provided a perfect example of how to make menswear exciting and interesting. 4. While I am a huge fan of color and big silhouettes, this look simply was not appealing to me. The dress worn by the American model, Grace Elizabeth, was designed by Christopher John Rogers and appeared in a May issue of Vogue Magazine that was dedicated to Lagerfeld. Even though it's on theme, I think there's simply too much happening. The pinks clash with one another, and the halter top makes it look like it was an upcycled high school formal dress. I appreciate the reference, just not the execution. 5. Showing up to an event like the Met Gala in only one piece of clothing is a daring choice, and it's one Lil Nas X made with his Dior thong. Wearing nothing but that undergarment, boots, jewels and jewelry, Lil Nas X arrived in a feline number with sparkly diamond and silver tones. I like that he stepped outside the box for menswear, but this just wasn't it for me. It felt outrageous just for the sake of being outrageous, and the cat references ran stale. The visuals are strikingly similar to his 2021 Met Gala look where he wore a gold bodysuit. I'd love to see the beloved artist show up in something more colorful and take a break from metals, but I'll just have to wait. 6. Lazy, tacky, bad. Jared Leto arrived in what was nothing more than a high-budget fur suit. In an attempt to honor Lagerfeld's love of the birman cat, Leto provided a look that felt like it was meant to just get reactions out of an audience – and I suppose he succeeded. It was too on the nose for the theme and just not the assignment. He took a big swing with this one, but unfortunately the bat turned around and hit him in the face. This was easily the worst look of the night. ■

Boba tea captures consumer hearts

Popping with flavor in stylish cups, bubble tea has a history of popularity.

by Annisyn Krebs-Carr, staff writer

Sweet, bitter, milky or chewy, the variations of bubble tea are plentiful, and since its creation in the '80s, its popularity has grown by the decade.

Bubble tea, or boba, is a beverage combining tea, milk, and "bubbles"—chewy, gelatinous balls made of tapioca or fruit jelly.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, boba has a long history dating back to 1949, when an entrepreneur and former bartender, Chang Fan Shu, developed a tea that was shaken in a martini mixer to create a foamy surface. Called hand-shaken, shou yao, the result was a luxury item that was not widely accessible to most Taiwanese until the economic boom of the 1980s.

In 1986 another entrepreneur, Tu Zonghe, added fen yuan, or tapioca balls, to green tea and opened a tea shop in T'ainan.

Many different origin stories about the creation of boba have been shared over the years, but in all different tales, the original bubble tea shop grew to become a chain with locations across Taiwan and in North America.

The typical bubble recipe has evolved to include larger tapioca balls, now called boba, giving rise to the name boba nai cha, or boba tea. These larger boba came with the development of a special extra-wide straw so that they can be sipped with the drink without need of a spoon.

Today boba has become a local phenomenon as well, with many different opportunities to grab the drink in the surrounding area.

Tastea Tea in Edwardsville, Cutea Bubble Tea in Fairview Heights and Kung Fu Tea in St. Louis are just a few of the boba shops in the surrounding area, but my personal favorite place to get boba is Yummy Donuts in Edwardsville.

With an appealing atmosphere with kind staff and a plentiful selection of boba and donuts, Yummy Donuts is the perfect place to get the drink, whether it's your first time or you're a boba connoisseur.

But even if you've had boba before, ordering can be overwhelming, with the numerous options and combinations of boba to try.

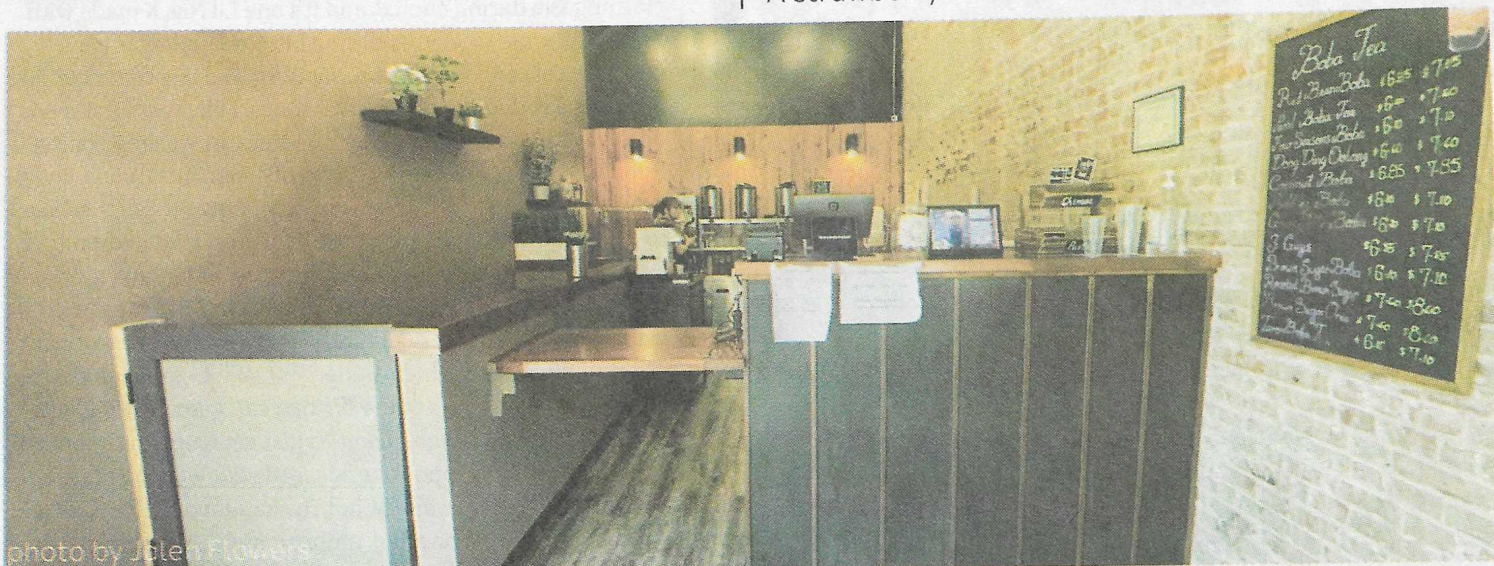
My go-to order is brown sugar milk tea with tapioca boba, a sweeter type of milk tea that combines with the chewiness of the tapioca to make the perfect drink. But if you don't like the chewier consistency of tapioca boba, you can always try popping boba, which as its name suggests, pops in your mouth.

If you aren't a fan of green tea or milk tea, you could also get a fruit tee with a fruit flavored popping boba, and if tea in general isn't your thing, a boba smoothie is always an option.

But wherever you are and whatever your preference is, milk tea, green tea or just a smoothie, plenty of opportunities are out there to try the drink that has captured the world. ■



A strawberry boba smoothie



Tastea in downtown Edwardsville.

Anticipated movies of the summer

Web slingers, wig wearers and warlords will hit the big screen this summer.

by Jalen Flowers, staff writer

"Oppenheimer" - July 21

Christopher Nolan is returning to the director's chair with his late summer release of "Oppenheimer." The film follows the life of J. Robert Oppenheimer, notorious for being the creator of the atomic bomb. The physicist will be played by Cillian Murphy, who perfectly fits the eerie aura and prominence that Oppenheimer embodied. Personally, I can't wait for Murphy's line delivery on Oppenheimer's infamous quote, "Now I am become death, destroyer of worlds."

"Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse" - June 2

The multiverse concept has taken over Marvel Studios in recent years, but the first installment in the Spider-Verse franchise set the precedent for the upcoming movies. Opposed to the Peter Parker we've seen perennially in Spider-Man movies, this film's hero is Miles Morales, destined with the rights to being New York's only Spider-Man. Marvel's newest animated installment will continue Miles' story, with the addition of the origins of other Spider-Men such as Spider-Man 2099, Spider-Punk and Spider-Woman.

"Barbie" - July 21

Between "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer," we haven't seen a bigger contrast in movies released on the same day since "Mamma Mia!" and "The Dark Knight" in 2008. The iconic children's toy finally gets its long anticipated feature film. Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling will star in the roles of Barbie and Ken, which sounds like a pairing destined to create some iconic on-screen interactions. "Barbie" will be a comedy, following the adventures of the couple in "Barbie Land." Expect this movie to inspire an aesthetic detailed with hot pink, blotchy patterns and roller-skates.

"The Flash" - June 16

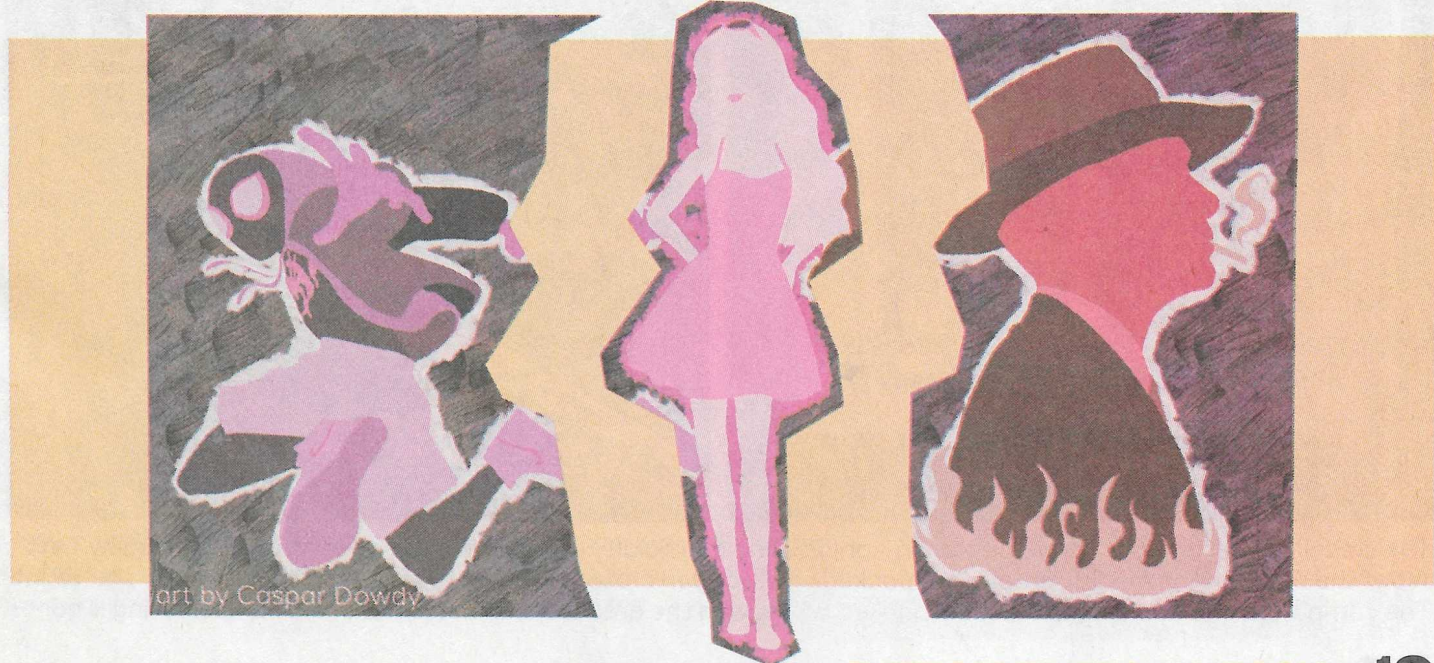
It's been an unpredictable two years for "The Flash" star Ezra Miller. After their reign of terror in Hawaii that gave us allegation after allegation, the actor somehow lands on their feet with his mid-June production. Based on the trailer, one of the DC Universe's more underrated heroes is getting his chance to engage with his fanbase. Considering the positive uproar "The Batman" received, DC's takeover is in the hands of the reception of this film.

"Haunted Mansion" - July 28

Disneyland's historic attraction is bringing its backstory to theaters. The movie will follow a family tasked with freeing their home from paranormal activity by hiring shaky ghostbusters. Lakeith Stanfield, Tiffany Haddish, Owen Wilson and Jamie Lee Curtis will star in the horror-comedy. While the release seems more fit for October, Disney has decided to end the anticipation and release the film as soon as possible. In late July, Walt Disney will get a chance to exorcise his demons.

"Asteroid City" - June 16

The cast of Wes Anderson's newest film sounds like a read-off of Hollywood's Walk of Fame. Scarlett Johansson, Bryan Cranston, Willem Dafoe and Edward Norton will all operate under Anderson's direction. The story takes place in 1955 and follows a ghost town space convention in the midst of life-altering events. The vague trailer portrays Anderson's unique aesthetic, with light-colored hues and over-saturation. While the actual subject of the film is still up to our imaginations, its cinematography is already palpable. ■



Change comes to the Media Center

Admin plans to create classrooms to accommodate the student population.

by Pera Onal, staff writer

The books have been stuffed into large wooden boxes. The computers are packed up and gone. Construction workers are clacking and clanging their tools, and the space feels empty without the familiar rush of students.

As of April 26, the media center has officially been shut down for construction for the remainder of the school year. Students who have any tech or ID issues can find help in the office.

This isn't just happening here. According to *The Edvocate*, there's been an ongoing decline in the number of public school librarians. Among the increase in e-books and advances in technology, the cause of this might be the decrease in school librarians. A research project through Antioch University Seattle shows that the rate of media specialists went down by 20% in the 2018-19 school year.

To be a librarian, a person must receive a master's degree in library and information sciences, which means the job can't go to just anyone. EHS hasn't had a media specialist since 2015.

Taking the place of the media center will be new classrooms. Although these are much needed—busing students to Nelson Elementary is a hassle and causes class time to be cut short—the library shouldn't have to suffer because of this.

Similarly, the commons will be expanded to create more lunchroom space. But if the commons can be expanded, so should the library, and soon.

Getting rid of it will deprive students, at least temporarily, of

valuable resources. According to the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, research has shown that school libraries are critical for “student achievement” and inspiring literacy in all ages.

The media center is a place where students can have a quiet place to work, at desktop computers or tables. It has resources to help students with projects and papers. It is where the beloved iCafe printer is. The media center provides teachers with an area larger than a classroom to hold fun, outside-the-box class activities.

Without it, teachers don't get a chance to expand their lectures for the benefit of their students. Even temporarily, the students must go to the office when they need help, a place that already has enough chaos before and after school.

Dr. Stuart said that the media center will be rebuilt within a couple of years. With all of the other high-priority construction projects taking place in the next several years, both at EHS and across the district, I wonder if the district will be able to see it through on that timetable.

The productivity of students is greatly at risk with this project. There's no way to stop it now that the construction is already taking place, but the district should think about the impact this could have on future generations when making more decisions like these, even if they are temporary. ■



The cleaning efforts in the library began on April 25, and it officially shut down for the year the following day. **Left** All of the books in the media center were packed into wooden crates and sent to an off-campus storage site. **Right** The computers and other furniture were packed up, leaving the area looking empty. As of May 1, everything is gone.

My school experience from hell

Not everyone is pleased with the way high school turned out over four years.

by Chase Golem, life editor

When I was at the doors of Liberty Middle School for the last time, I thought high school would be the most exciting four years of my life, where I would finally expand my social circle and have the best time of my life.

I was completely wrong. It's been the most boring and, for the most part, unexciting four years of my life. It's not like it was completely boring, high school had its moments – but only a few.

Freshman year started out fine. I was already accustomed to the building because of summer school, and I already knew how to get around. I had fun classes, and I experienced many fun moments during my freshman year.

There were many events that we had to participate in that year too. The Student Council held, what seemed like, more activities and spirit weeks than we're offered now. There was always something to keep the students engaged. It was the only reason I stayed engaged with school, because events were happening, and I had friends to go to them with. Even with some hiccups nearing the end of the calendar year, it was enjoyable.

“COVID-19 shut down schools across the state for the rest of the year. Nothing was happening anymore.”

Of course, the second semester of my freshman year was the downfall of everything I had thought high school was going to be. Seniors were justifiably mad that things like graduation, prom and senior sunset weren't happening due to the COVID lockdown.

This continued throughout my sophomore year, which was also fun – but only because of the classes. Literally nothing else that I can recall happened that year.

Everything was on Zoom, and it was absolute hell. It was funny the first couple times a cat came on screen or someone yelled in someone's house, but it was boring after a week. Classes were so boring that I left most of them early because I couldn't stand (or sit) to deal with it anymore. It was nothing fun. I couldn't watch movies over Zoom or have class celebrations in my French class that would have normally happened.

Junior year was more compelling than the previous year and a half, but it left me wanting more. We still couldn't have some events, or they had to be held outside. Outdoor homecoming is a personal hell I don't want to remember; the sweating tents were too traumatic even to want to recall. The only thing I remember

from junior year is the bathrooms being destroyed, and that's it.

Without any way to increase my engagement, my academic effort and motivation diminished. There was nothing to look forward to because nothing was happening. I have found that when there is something to look forward to, like drama club performances or something other than a test or more notes, I do better.

My life isn't entirely drained out by the endless cycle of waking up early, going to school, maybe working a shift, going home and doing endless amounts of homework until midnight and the cycle repeats. It's almost as if teenagers can't do that for two straight years.

I went into my senior year with some optimism that the year wouldn't drag on like the past two, and I've been surprised by my senior year's relative normalcy. Senior sunrise happened, we got a normal homecoming, Mr. EHS came back (and yearbook swept the competition), and we still have our week out early, normal prom, Tour de Grove and graduation ahead.

All I can say for new, incoming students is to get involved with the school. Administration doesn't do it alone, and Student Council and other clubs do the bulk of the work planning and running school events. I know our class government and Student Council did a lot of work, and I can't put the blame on them for the restrictions.

I'm glad that the class of 2023 will have a normal end to our senior year, and I understand now why seniors from the 2021 and 2022 classes were so disappointed about their events being either canceled or inhibited by restrictions.

The past four years have been, unquestionably, boring, and I am more than ready to leave EHS behind me. If I had been engaged to do my work, or found a way not to make it boring, I most likely wouldn't feel the way I do about this place. I know the school tried to boost student morale, but no number of T-shirt cannons or music through the PA helped.

I certainly hope that college life is much better because I don't think I could do another day of high school, let alone another hour. ■

In a survey of 45 seniors, 35.6% said they weren't satisfied with their high school experience.

“I feel no connection to this place or the people in it.”

–senior Nick Glasgow

“COVID ruined a lot of the experiences I could have had.”

– senior Dallas Jenkins

A love letter to student journalism

by Caspar Dowdy, editor-in-chief

The classes that came before me did a horrible job, really, of portraying senior year accurately. The air of fun, the hints at a chance to relax earned by three years of hard work, did not prepare me for just how stressful this final stretch of high school would be. In the shuffle of deadlines, assignments and since-when-am-I-an-adult anxiety, it's been hard to find time to think about much of anything but the future.

In the rare pockets of calm I find myself thinking a lot about the idea of home. First, leaving home post-lockdown, then suddenly leaving home for college. How home can change when trees and cornfields go down as stores and subdivisions pop up. What home will look like in the future.

More than anything, though, I've thought about where I feel at home. And for the past four years, that's been tucked away inside the media center, among the staff of EHS Publications.

I have this memory of my parents, in the months before my older sibling graduated from EHS, being worried about how I would adjust to the school. I was a withdrawn, easily-overwhelmed eighth grader, reluctant to the idea of navigating hundreds of loud students and dozens of crowded hallways.

It was in that last year at Liberty that I joined Media Club. Spending my activity period working on the yearbook a few times a week — my schedule was split with orchestra — I ended up with an audience for my writing, something I wasn't used to outside of sharing projects with a few friends.

As much as I discovered I enjoyed writing for other people, I discovered that people liked what I wrote.

By that point, it was clear that although the constant movement at EHS would be a challenge as I learned to adapt, it was the only environment that I was sure could keep up with everything I wanted to do. As the year came to a close, I decided I wasn't done with yearbook after middle school and applied to work on *The Tiger*.

Right away, being on staff came to define my life at EHS. I was still shy, still scared to jump into everything the school could offer me, but I took refuge inside the yearbook room. I felt like my editors, seniors who seemed all-knowing at the time, valued what I contributed. By the time that first year was cut short by the pandemic, I'd found a niche inside a massive school.

Coming out of COVID, I felt like I was losing time. I wanted to get back to what I did before, but I also wanted more. I wanted to be at all the school events again, and this time, I actually wanted to enjoy them.

When no one was looking, I was the same anxious person I'd been freshman year. But in the years since then, I'd grown as a student journalist, first in yearbook and later on the newspaper staff. Being an editor gave me a way to be a small part of all the stories EHS held. Behind a camera or a voice recorder, I had a way to be engaged in my school community when I didn't know how to approach it on my own.

When I became editor-in-chief for both publications, the pile of work always next to my computer probably should have cooled my warm feelings about what I was doing.

Maybe it was the uncertainty that comes with moving on to the next stage of life, maybe it was the sudden flare-up of a mystery chronic illness (thank you, everyone, for being cool about all the coughing), but I found myself needing to hold on to something during my senior year. Of all the things I could have clung to, I'm glad I chose the one that left me writing *Tiger Times* Online articles waiting for lung x-rays at an urgent care. It kept things interesting.

For as tough of a program as it can be, Publications has been a gentle push to keep going when it would have been much easier to give in.

In the past few months, I've tried so many times to distill everything I've learned from my time with EHS Publications into words — in college essays, scholarship applications, class projects, in the chasm of self-reflection that was my Illinois Journalist of the Year Portfolio. Every time I've felt like I've fallen short. Trying to explain how this program has impacted me feels somehow like trying to extract my own lungs as a way to explain where the coughs come from: impossible to do without missing something vital and a little painful to think about.

After so long, after so many hours spent behind computer screens glowing with Google Docs or Adobe InDesign, after coming in on early mornings or staying until the evenings to meet deadlines, after asking what feels like every student in the building if they'd like to be interviewed, after putting up with the worst cell service in Edwardsville inside the media center — after the headaches, the lost sleep, the stress, the overcommitment, the underappreciation — after pouring everything into this school's publications program for the past four years, I think it's expected of me to say the thing I most look forward to about graduation is "doing anything but this."

And yet I can picture myself on my last day of high school, having to be dragged out of A113 in a floral Tour-de-Grove shirt.

Because I have no other option, I'll try my best to walk away from all of it when I walk across the stage to get my diploma.

The future looks good. I have a future in journalism ahead of me beyond EHS, and I leave the publications in good hands. I've taken everything this program can give me, and as I carry what I've learned off to new adventures, I'm ready for it to be someone else's turn.

Almost. ■



Standing with the tiger mascot (aka Maddox) on the sidelines of a home football game.

What are your thoughts regarding the death of Queen Elizabeth II?

She is a real-life queen from real life, and I think it's cool that she's real, and from real life.

Do you plan on going trick-or-treating or to a Halloween party?

My friends plan on dressing up like squirrels and chasing me around as I run for my life.

What do you tell your team after a loss like that?

You have to have a short memory, like when I was in the fourth grade. Two of the best years of my life.

Do you eat breakfast in the mornings? Why or why not?

andrew tate says not to.

What is your dream vacation destination?

A dumpster, homey and warm.

How did you feel after you realized that you wouldn't be able to [travel] due to the Southwest issues?

Heartbroken probably sounds like some 1st world problem BS but it's closest to the truth.

What is your definition of dating?

Idk I got led on and dropped

What makes this season different than last year?

I quit. Idk how to do this interviewing stuff.

If you wish to be contacted for an interview, leave your name and contact information.

slay (555) your-mom

Back by popular demand:

ASK AJC:

What's the funniest quote you've received this year?

